

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY  
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats., a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 200 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

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**PRESENT:** Chair Erickson, Jim Haskins, Ed Koslowski, Duane Pierce, Joe Witkowski, Cressie Birder, Linda Reiten, Lynn Geiser

**EXCUSED:** Delores Pierce, Tracy Rosinski, Rosemary Desisles

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**\*\*Running Total of Veterans' Certificates: 1726**

**1. Call Meeting to Order.**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Erickson at 4:30 pm.

**2. Invocation.**

**3. Approve/Modify Agenda.**

**Motion made by Duane Pierce, seconded by Jim Haskins to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**4. Approve/Modify Minutes of December 15, 2015.**

**Motion made by Joe Witkowski, seconded by Ed Koslowski to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**5. Presentation re: Honor Rewards Program.**

CVSO Jerry Polus introduced Ellen Arguellez from Fidlar Technologies to the group. Ellen talked about the Honor Rewards Program. She said that Fidlar Technologies is the software company that supports the Register of Deeds office. She explained that the Honor Rewards program is a way to honor and acknowledge the service and sacrifice that veterans have given to the country. She presented a Power Point that explains the program. Veterans sign up for the program online and order an ID card and then present the ID card at participating businesses to receive discounts and other offers. Businesses are also able to sign up and list their discount online. Ellen stated that there are a number of ways to promote the program, including face to face visits with businesses, sending letters to businesses and word of mouth. Following the presentation, Ellen answered questions from the Subcommittee.

Polus asked if this program is typically offered to reservists and National Guard members and Ellen responded that it is up to the county and she estimated that about half of the counties allow reservists and National Guard members to participate and about half of the participating counties also allow spouses to participate in the program.

Koslowski asked if the ID card is valid in all counties that have the Honor Rewards program. Ellen responded that that is determined on a county by county basis but she felt that most businesses would honor out of county IDs.

Polus noted that the veteran benefits by receiving discounts on a year round basis, but for the businesses it also provides free advertising so it is a mutually beneficial program. Ellen talked about the launch kit they provide to businesses when they sign up to participate in the program. She also indicated that they do not

store information from veterans when they sign up for their cards so it is very, very secure. Linda Pera of the Register of Deeds Office was in attendance at the meeting and noted that the Veterans Office would incur costs to mail the ID cards out after they are received from Fidlir but also noted that if the businesses would be agreeable to accepting a military or medical ID card or the veterans license as proof of being a veteran, the ID cards from Fidlir may not need to be mailed out. Alternatively, Polus noted that he could ask the veterans to pick up the cards in his office.

Polus stated his largest concern is how to reach out to the thousands of businesses in Brown County to let them know about the program. He noted that he intends to reach out to a number of Chambers and business associations and ask them to do the soliciting of businesses. Ellen also indicated that she has several examples of letters that can be sent to the businesses explaining the program and asking for participation and she would be able to help draft something specific for Brown County. She also has examples of press releases and she noted that the most successful campaigns use both a newspaper and TV launch at the same time. Ellen also has a letter to veterans that she recommends providing at the time they receive their ID card.

Ed Koslowski thought it sounded like a good program and it should be open to everyone who signed on the dotted line, including the reserves and National Guard. He suggested that this could also be promoted at the event at the Fair and through the veterans' organizations as well. Erickson agreed that the Fair would be a good place to promote this. He asked how long it would take to get Brown County enrolled in the program and Ellen responded that it could be done immediately. Lynn Geiser asked for confirmation of what the qualifiers would be and Polus responded that he would like this to be available to members of the reserves and National Guard as well as active duty personnel. Duane Pierce agreed that including everyone would be more logical as there are some offers and other things that are available to active duty personnel but not reserves or National Guard. Geiser agreed that including all services members would be nice as some feel that they are not eligible for all of the benefits.

Ellen said the average discount is between 10 – 15% off of products or services, although each business decides what to offer. Haskins asked what percentage of businesses typically participate in the program and Ellen stated that she was not able to give a specific figure because it varies widely across the board but she did say that launch campaigns are much more successful when there is face to face contact with businesses. Pierce noted that when he goes to a business that treats veterans well, he tells all the other veterans he knows and this would help promote participating businesses.

Erickson's suggestion was to move ahead with the program, get Brown County listed on the Honor Rewards website and get some launch kits and go from there. Joe Witkowski asked if the County Board needed to vote on this and Erickson stated that approval of the Board was not necessary. Polus added that an announcement will be made to the Board to make them aware that the program is being started. Polus said he would like to meet with the Chamber and the business associations to determine what role they can play to help implement the program and set a target start date. He said that he and Erickson will do some legwork over the next 30 days with the Chambers and business associations and we can discuss this in greater detail at the next meeting.

**6. Possible Discussion re: 2016 Veterans' Appreciation Day at the Brown County Fair.  
6A. 25th Anniversary of Desert Storm.**

There was nothing new regarding the Fair to report.

**7. Report from CVSO Jerry Polus.**

Polus reported that some policies and procedures have been changed in his office but they are mainly internal changes and nothing critical. He indicated that last year they provided approximately \$19,000 of assistance to needy veterans from their emergency fund. Polus and his staff are working on fine tuning the guidelines for the program in the area of accountability and record keeping. He will explain this further at next month's meeting.

Polus continued that 2016 is off to a good but busy start. Witkowski asked if the Veterans Court was still going well and Polus indicated that it is and he continues to go to court on Friday mornings. The program has been successful and there have been some graduates. Polus also noted that they are working on doing some outreach at the Vet's Center, Veterans' Hospital and NWTC.

**8. Comments from Carl Soderberg.**

Carl Soderberg was not in attendance and therefore no report was given.

**9. Report from Committee Members Present (Erickson, Dahlke, Desisles, Haskins, Geiser, Koslowski, Maino, Pierce, Rosinski & Witkowski).**

-Erickson did not have anything to report.

-Haskins reported that he had seen a truck in De Pere recently from Maximum Trucking Company. He was impressed with the truck as it said "Thanks to All Armed Forces for Keeping Our Country Free" and it had a number of patriotic pictures on it. Haskins also shared several recent articles from the newspaper relating to veterans. One was about the Quilt of Valor and the other was about a veteran's ashes that were put in shotgun shells and then fired by relatives and friends of the deceased veteran.

-Geiser reported that Delores Mueller passed away on January 17, 2016. Mueller was active in the American Legion for 65 years. Her funereal will be held on January 21, 2016 from 4:00 – 8:00 pm at Blaney Funeral Home. Geiser also noted that the Women's Empowerment Group paint and wine event is on Thursday night at 6:30 pm and all women veterans, spouses and sisters are invited.

-Koslowski talked about Civil Air Patrol 169 and asked if he Subcommittee felt that they should be asked to participate in the Fair event. Polus noted that they did do a nice ceremony at the arena and he felt that they should be asked to participate in the Fair. Koslowski also said that he had sent out an e-mail regarding a veterans' mentoring group that has been formed in Appleton and asked the Subcommittee if he should invite someone from that group to talk at this Subcommittee.

Koslowski continued that he has been advised that proceeds from the City Run will be going to the Veterans' Court this year instead of the Wounded Warriors. He concluded his report by saying that there is a PTSD seminar being presented in King. He will be attending along with Lynn Geiser.

Koslowski also had tickets for the UPS Society who will be holding their Washington Lincoln Annual Dinner at the Woods on Monday, February 15. The Veteran of the Year, Larry Heyrman, President of the UPS will be honored at this event. Tickets are \$13.50 each.

-Pierce reported that he had recently received a call from one of the Vietnam Vets of America in the Eau Claire Chapter and it was indicated that this summer they will be doing a large event in conjunction with the Vietnam War's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They will have the traveling wall there along with a number of other activities. Pierce will keep the Subcommittee advised of this event as it gets nearer. He also mentioned the Pow Wow on Armed Forces weekend in Keshena and he will keep the Subcommittee advised of this event as well.

-Witkowski shared a picture of the Women's Bowling Association who recently prepared and delivered more than 400 Christmas baskets for veterans confined to nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Brown and Kewaunee Counties as well as Seymour. Witkowski also shared an article on the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Florida and indicated that they will be having their first private interment ceremony soon and will be open to burial of other veterans the following day. Witkowski concluded by sharing an article about an author who is writing a book about the Battle of the Bulge.

**10. Such Other Matters as Authorized by Law.**

None.

11. **Adjourn.**

**Motion made by Jim Haskins, seconded by Duane Pierce to adjourn at 5:51 pm. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Giannunzio  
Recording Secretary